

Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Banneker, August 30, 1791, from the Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO BENJAMIN BANNEKER¹ J. MSS.

1 Banneker's letter, with this reply, was printed in pamphlet form, as follows:

Copy of a letter from Benjamin Banneker to the Secretary of State, with his answer.
Philadelphia, Daniel Lawrence. MDCCXCII. 4 to PP. 15.

Philadelphia Aug. 30. 1791.

Sir, —I thank you sincerely for your letter of the 19th instant and for the Almanac it contained. No body wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren, talents equal to those of the other colors of men, and that the appearance of a want of them is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence, both in Africa & America. I can add with truth, that no body wishes more ardently to see a good system commenced for raising the condition both of their body & mind to what it ought to be, as fast as the imbecility of their present existence, and other circumstances which cannot be neglected, will admit. I have taken the liberty of sending your Almanac to Monsieur de Condorcet, Secretary of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and member of the Philanthropic society, because I consider it as a document to which your whole colour had a right for their justification against the doubts which have been entertained of them. I am with great esteem, Sir Your most obedt humble servt.